

WO9842947A

Publication Title:

No title available

Abstract:

Abstract not available for WO9842947A Data supplied from the esp@cenet database - Worldwide

Courtesy of <http://v3.espacenet.com>

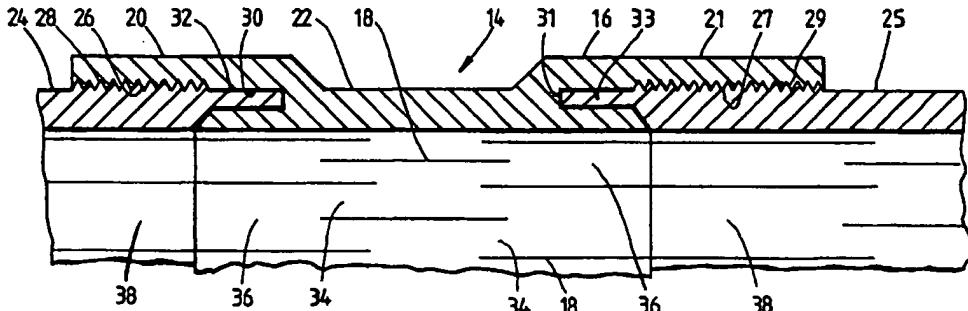


INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶ : E21B 17/08, 43/10, 43/08, F16L 13/14		A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 98/42947
			(43) International Publication Date: 1 October 1998 (01.10.98)

(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB98/00863	(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, GM, GW, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
(22) International Filing Date: 20 March 1998 (20.03.98)	
(30) Priority Data: 9705928.1 21 March 1997 (21.03.97) GB 9723338.1 4 November 1997 (04.11.97) GB	
(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): PETROLINE WELLSYSTEMS LIMITED [GB/GB]; Offshore Technology Park, Claymore Drive, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen AB23 8GD (GB).	
(72) Inventor; and	
(73) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): METCALFE, Paul, David [GB/GB]; North Wing, Bucklerburn Steading, Peterculter AB14 0NP (GB).	
(74) Agents: McCALLUM, William, Potter et al.; Cruikshank & Fairweather, 19 Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow G1 3AE (GB).	

(54) Title: EXPANDABLE SLOTTED TUBING STRING AND METHOD FOR CONNECTING SUCH A TUBING STRING



(57) Abstract

An expandable tubing assembly comprises a tubular connector (16) defining overlapping longitudinal slots (18), the connector (16) comprising end portions (20, 21) and an intermediate portion (22). The slots (18) extend over the whole length of the connector (16), but the only slot overlap occurs in the intermediate portion (22). The assembly further comprises lengths of expandable tubing (24, 25) defining overlapping longitudinal slots (12) and having end portions defining nodes (38) between and beyond the ends of the tubing slots (12). Tubing threads (28, 29) are formed on the end most tubing nodes. The connector end portions define threads (26, 27) and are coupled with the threads (28, 29) formed on the nodes of the respective end portions of the tubing lengths.

FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AL	Albania	ES	Spain	LS	Lesotho	SI	Slovenia
AM	Armenia	FI	Finland	LT	Lithuania	SK	Slovakia
AT	Austria	FR	France	LU	Luxembourg	SN	Senegal
AU	Australia	GA	Gabon	LV	Latvia	SZ	Swaziland
AZ	Azerbaijan	GB	United Kingdom	MC	Monaco	TD	Chad
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	GE	Georgia	MD	Republic of Moldova	TG	Togo
BB	Barbados	GH	Ghana	MG	Madagascar	TJ	Tajikistan
BE	Belgium	GN	Guinea	MK	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	TM	Turkmenistan
BF	Burkina Faso	GR	Greece			TR	Turkey
BG	Bulgaria	HU	Hungary	ML	Mali	TT	Trinidad and Tobago
BJ	Benin	IE	Ireland	MN	Mongolia	UA	Ukraine
BR	Brazil	IL	Israel	MR	Mauritania	UG	Uganda
BY	Belarus	IS	Iceland	MW	Malawi	US	United States of America
CA	Canada	IT	Italy	MX	Mexico	UZ	Uzbekistan
CF	Central African Republic	JP	Japan	NE	Niger	VN	Viet Nam
CG	Congo	KE	Kenya	NL	Netherlands	YU	Yugoslavia
CH	Switzerland	KG	Kyrgyzstan	NO	Norway	ZW	Zimbabwe
CI	Côte d'Ivoire	KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	NZ	New Zealand		
CM	Cameroon	KR	Republic of Korea	PL	Poland		
CN	China	KZ	Republic of Kazakhstan	PT	Portugal		
CU	Cuba	LC	Saint Lucia	RO	Romania		
CZ	Czech Republic	LJ	Liechtenstein	RU	Russian Federation		
DE	Germany	LK	Sri Lanka	SD	Sudan		
DK	Denmark	LR	Liberia	SE	Sweden		
EE	Estonia			SG	Singapore		

EXPANDABLE SLOTTED TUBING STRING AND METHOD FOR CONNECTING SUCH A TUBING STRING

This invention relates to a connector, and in particular to a connector forming part of an expandable tubing assembly. The invention also relates to a method of connecting lengths of expandable tubing.

5 WO93\25800 describes expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots. On expansion of the tubing, by pushing or pulling a mandrel through the tubing, the slots expand to form diamond-shaped apertures. The expansion is accommodated by deformation of the fingers of metal between the slots, this deformation taking place predominantly at the slot ends, and also by circumferential extension of the parts of the tubing wall beyond the slot ends. In expandable tubing developed by the applicants radial expansion is achieved with the parts of the tubing 10 wall between and beyond the slot ends experiencing little if any deformation, these parts being known as the tubing 15 "nodes".

Arrangements for connecting lengths of slotted tubing are disclosed in WO96\37687 and WO97\21901, the disclosures 20 of which are incorporated herein by reference. Both of these documents describe arrangements in which the end of one length of tubing defines a male coupling portion which is received within a female coupling portion on the other length of tubing and attached thereto.

25 In another coupling arrangement, the ends of the tubing lengths are received within an external coupling

sleeve. However, it has been found that, following expansion, the sleeve contracts radially by a significant extent; this creates a restriction in the bore defined by the tubing.

5 According to the present invention there is provided a method of connecting lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots, the method comprising:

providing a tubular connector defining overlapping longitudinal slots and comprising end portions;

providing lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots and having end portions defining nodes between and beyond the ends of the slots; and

15 connecting the connector end portions to nodes of respective end portions of the tubing lengths.

According to another aspect of the present invention there is provided an expandable tubing assembly comprising:

20 a tubular connector defining overlapping longitudinal slots and comprising end portions;

lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots and having end portions defining nodes between and beyond the ends of the slots; and

25 the connector end portions being coupled to the nodes of the respective end portions of the tubing lengths.

The formation of the connections between the connector end portions and the nodes of the tubing end portions provides for a relatively secure connection. Preferably,

the connector end portions and the nodes of the tubing end portions are threaded, and the absence of significant deformation at the nodes facilitates maintenance of a secure connection on expansion of the tubing lengths and 5 the connector.

Preferably also, the connector further comprises an intermediate portion selected to be of corresponding configuration to the tubing lengths, such that the expansion characteristics of the connected tubing assembly 10 will be substantially constant over the connection.

Preferably also, each connector end portion defines a slot to receive a corresponding tongue provided on the respective tubing length end portion.

According to a further aspect of the present invention 15 there is provided an expandable tubing assembly comprising:

a tubular connector defining overlapping longitudinal slots, the connector comprising end portions and an intermediate portion; and

lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping 20 longitudinal slots and having end portions coupled to the connector end portions,

at least the connector intermediate portion being of corresponding configuration to the tubing lengths, such that the expansion characteristics of the intermediate 25 portion and the tubing lengths correspond.

This aspect of the invention provides a connector which expands in a compatible manner to the adjacent tubing and thus facilitates reliable expansion of an expandable

tubing string.

According to still further aspect of the present invention there is provided an arrangement for coupling lengths of expandable tubing, the arrangement comprising a 5 sleeve defining overlapping longitudinal slots, first and second tubing lengths defining overlapping longitudinal slots, in use the sleeve and tubing lengths being radially expandable by deformation of fingers of material where adjacent circumferentially spaced slots overlap, and 10 connecting means for connecting the sleeve to the ends of the tubing lengths, the deformable fingers of the sleeve being axially spaced from the endmost deformable fingers of the respective tubing lengths.

In use, on expansion of the tubing lengths and the 15 sleeve, the deformation of the sleeve fingers will take place following the deformation of the endmost fingers of the first tubing length and prior to the deformation of the endmost fingers of the second tubing length. It has been found that, following expansion, there is little or no 20 diametrical shrinkage of the sleeve, and the force necessary to expand the coupled tubing ends is approximately half that required to expand tubing ends coupled with a sleeve in which there is substantial overlap between the sleeve and the tubing ends.

25 The invention also relates to a method for coupling the ends of first and second lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots and deformable fingers of material where adjacent circumferentially spaced

slots overlap, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a sleeve defining overlapping longitudinal slots and deformable fingers of material where adjacent circumferentially spaced slots overlap;

5 coupling the sleeve to the ends of first and second lengths of expandable tubing such that the fingers of the sleeve are longitudinally spaced from the endmost fingers of the tubing lengths; and

10 forcing an expansion member through the connected tubing lengths to expand the sleeve and tubing lengths.

As used herein, the term slots is intended to encompass slots which extend through the walls of the sleeve and tubing, slots which extend only part way through the walls and any other appropriate weakening of the walls
15 such as lines of bores or scallops.

Preferably, the connecting means are provided at circumferentially spaced locations at the end of the tubing lengths beyond the endmost tubing fingers, and at the ends of the sleeve beyond the respective endmost tubing fingers.

20 The connecting means may comprise pins, rivets, screws and the like for location in appropriate aligned bores provided in the sleeve and tubing lengths. Single fasteners may be provided beyond each tubing finger, or multiple fasteners may be provided.

25 Preferably also, the unexpanded sleeve is of larger diameter than the tubing lengths. Most preferably, the sleeve and the tubing length are each of substantially constant diameter along their length.

According to a still further aspect of the present invention there is provided an arrangement for coupling lengths of expandable tubing, the arrangement comprising a longitudinally slotted sleeve, first and second tubing 5 lengths defining overlapping longitudinal slots, in use the tubing lengths being radially expandable by deformation of fingers of material where adjacent circumferentially spaced slots overlap, and connecting means for connecting the sleeve to the ends of the tubing lengths.

10 The sleeve may be in the form of longitudinally extending strips of metal. Most preferably, the strips are rectilinear. On expansion, the strips of the sleeve move radially outwardly and separate circumferentially. Initially, that is prior to expansion, the strips may be 15 circumferentially connected, by frangible links such as wire, webs of material or one or more welds, to facilitate sleeve handling.

20 The invention further relates to a method for coupling the ends of first and second lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots and deformable fingers of material where adjacent circumferentially spaced slots overlap, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a sleeve comprising longitudinally extending strips of material;

25 coupling the sleeve to the ends of first and second lengths of expandable tubing; and

forcing an expansion member through the connected tubing lengths to expand the sleeve and tubing lengths.

Preferably, the connecting means are provided at circumferentially spaced locations at the end of the tubing lengths beyond the endmost tubing fingers, and at the ends of the sleeve. The connecting means may comprise pins, 5 rivets, screws and the like for location in appropriate aligned bores provided in the sleeve and tubing lengths. Single fasteners may be provided beyond each tubing finger, or multiple fasteners may be provided.

Preferably also, the unexpanded sleeve is of larger 10 diameter than the tubing lengths. Most preferably, the sleeve and the tubing length are each of substantially constant diameter along their length.

These and other aspects of the present invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the 15 accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a sectional view of a length of expandable tubing, shown in an expanded configuration;

Figure 2 is a sectional view of an expandable tubing assembly in accordance with a first embodiment of the 20 present invention;

Figure 3 is a schematic plan view of an arrangement for coupling lengths of expandable tubing in accordance with a second embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 4 is a sectional view of Figure 3; and 25

Figure 5 is a schematic plan view of an arrangement for coupling lengths of expandable tubing in accordance with a third embodiment of the present invention;

Reference is first made to Figure 1 of the drawings,

which illustrates a length of expandable tubing 10. In its initial configuration, the tubing 10 is simply a length of pipe in which a series of longitudinal slots 12 have been machined. Applying a radially outward force to the tubing 5 wall, by passing a mandrel through the tubing, causes the tubing to expand such that the slots 12 become diamond-shaped openings.

The tubing 10 is supplied in lengths suitable for transportation and handling and these are joined to one 10 another on surface to create a tubular string. The assembly 14 illustrated in Figure 2 of the drawings allows lengths of expandable tubing 10 to be connected to form a string, as will now be described.

The assembly 14 comprises a tubular connector 16 defining overlapping longitudinal slots 18, the connector 16 comprising end portions 20, 21 and an intermediate portion 22. The slots 18 extend over the whole length of the connector 16, but the only slot overlap occurs in the intermediate portion 22.

20 The connector 16 is utilised to join the ends of two lengths of expandable tubing 24, 25, the ends of which are adapted to engage with the connector end portions 20, 21 as described below.

25 The connector intermediate portion 22 is of substantially the same wall thickness as the tubing 24, 25, however the connector end portions 20, 21 are upset, that is they include portions of greater wall thickness than the tubing 24, 25 and are of a greater diameter than the tubing

24, 25. The inner walls of each connector end portion 20, 21 define threads 26, 27 for engaging corresponding threads 28, 29 on the outer surface of the tubing 24, 25. Inwardly of the threads 26, 27 the end portions 20, 21 define 5 grooves 30, 31 to receive corresponding tongues 32, 33 provided on the ends of the tubing lengths 24, 25.

As noted above, the connector slots 18 only overlap in the intermediate portion 22, such that on expansion of the connector 16 and the tubing lengths 24, 25 the connector 16 10 is only subject to significant deformation in the intermediate portion 22, at and adjacent the slot overlap 34. The amount of deformation is substantially lower in the rest of the connector 16, particularly in the "nodes" 36 between the ends of the longitudinally aligned slots 18. 15 The tubing lengths 24, 25 feature nodes 38 between and beyond the ends of the tubing slots 12 and the tubing threads 28, 29 are formed on the end most tubing nodes.

In use, the tubing lengths 24, 25 are connected by first making up the connector 16 to one tubing length 24, 20 and then making up the second tubing length 25 to the other end of the connector 16. A number of tubing lengths are connected in this way to form a tubing string, which is run into a wellbore. Once in a desired position, an expansion mandrel is run through the tubing string, and radially 25 extends the connector 16 and the tubing lengths 24, 25. In doing so, the connector slots 18 and tubing slots 12 are expanded to define diamond shaped openings, as are illustrated in Figure 1. As described above the connector

is only subject to substantial deformation at the slot overlaps 34, such that the metal of the slot end portions 20, 21 is subject to minimal deformation. As the deformation of the metal of the connector occurs primarily 5 in the intermediate portion 22, which is of corresponding diameter and thickness to the tubing 24, 25, the expansion properties of the connector 16 are similar to the tubing 24, 25, such that the connector 16 and tubing lengths 24, 25 will expand in corresponding and predictable manner, 10 minimising the occurrence of irregularities in the internal diameter of the expanded tubing string.

From the above description it will be apparent to those of skill in the art that the assembly 14 provides a convenient means for connecting expandable tubing lengths. 15 It is recognised that, for some applications, users may prefer to include coupling means between the connector end portions and the tubing lengths in addition to the thread connection, and in such cases screws, rivets, pins or the like may be provided to extend between the end portions 20, 20 21 and the tubing lengths 26, 27.

Reference is now made to Figures 3 and 4 of the drawings which will illustrate an arrangement 50 for connecting first and second lengths 52, 54 of expandable tubing utilising an expandable sleeve 56 secured to the 25 ends of the tubing lengths 52, 54 by screws 58. The tubing walls 60, 61 and the sleeve wall 62 define overlapping longitudinal slots 64, 65, 66. Expansion of the tubing lengths 52, 54 and the sleeve 56 is accommodated by

deformation of fingers of material 68, 69, 70 where the slots 64, 65, 66 overlap, and following deformation the slots 64, 65, 66 define diamond-shaped apertures. During expansion there is little or no deformation of the nodes 5 72, 73, 74 between the longitudinally spaced slots 64, 65, 66, and the screws 58 pass through bores in the endmost nodes 72, 73, 74 of the tubing lengths 52, 54 and the sleeve 56, at the ends of the tubing lengths 52, 54 and sleeve 56. Thus, the endmost deformable fingers of the 10 tubing lengths 68, 69 are axially spaced from the endmost fingers of the sleeve 70.

In use, the tubing lengths 52, 54 and sleeves 56 are shipped in disassembled form. The tubing lengths 52, 54 are made up on surface as the tubing is fed into the bore 15 in which the tubing is to be utilised. In particular, the ends of the tubing lengths 52, 54 are located in the respective ends of the sleeve 56. The screws 58 are then located and tightened in the screw bores. A number of tubing lengths are made up to provide the desired length of 20 tubing and the assembled tubing run into the bore. On reaching the desired location downhole, the tubing is anchored in place, and an expansion cone then pushed or pulled through the tubing. The cone expands the tubing length 52, 54 radially outwards such that, as mentioned 25 above, the slots 64, 65, 66 become diamond-shaped, with the expansion being accommodated by deformation of the fingers 68, 69, 70. The sleeve 56 deforms in a similar manner to the tubing lengths 52, 54. On moving through the

arrangement 50, the expansion cone deforms, in turn, the endmost fingers 68 of the first tubing length 52, the fingers 70a at the first end of the sleeve 56, the fingers 70b at the second end of the sleeve 56, and finally the 5 endmost fingers 69 of the second tubing length 54.

In testing it has been found that the forces required to expand the connecting arrangement 50 are the same or only slightly higher than the forces required to expand the tubing lengths 52, 54. Also, the expanded sleeve 56 tends 10 to retain its expanded form, and suffers little or no diametrical shrinkage after the expansion cone has passed through the sleeve 56. Thus, the present invention avoids the difficulties experienced with previously proposed sleeve connectors. Further, the connection arrangement 50 15 is less expensive to produce than the male\female connectors as described in WO96\37687 and WO97\21901.

Reference is now made to Figure 5 of the drawings, which illustrates an alternative arrangement 110 for connecting first and second lengths 112, 114 of expandable 20 tubing utilising an expandable sleeve 116 secured to the ends of the tubing lengths 112, 114 by screws 118. The tubing walls define overlapping longitudinal slots 124, 125. However, unlike the first described embodiment, the sleeve wall is formed of individual longitudinally 25 extending strips 126. Expansion of the tubing lengths 112, 114 and the sleeve 116 is accommodated by deformation of fingers of material 128, 129 where the slots 124, 125 overlap, and circumferential separation of the sleeve

strips 126. Following deformation the slots 124, 125 define diamond-shaped apertures. During expansion there is little or no deformation of the nodes 132, 133 between the longitudinally spaced slots 124, 125, and the screws 118 5 pass through bores in the endmost nodes 132, 133 of the tubing lengths 112, 114 and the ends of the sleeve strips 126.

It will further be apparent to those of skill in the art that the above-described embodiment is merely exemplary 10 of the present invention, and that various modifications and improvements may be made thereto, without departing from the scope of the present invention.

CLAIMS

1. An expandable tubing assembly comprising:
 - a tubular connector defining overlapping longitudinal slots and comprising slotted end portions; and
 - 5 lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots and having slotted end portions defining nodes beyond the ends of the slots, the connector end portions being coupled to the nodes of respective end portions of the tubing lengths.
- 10 2. The assembly of claim 1, wherein the connector end portions and the nodes of the tubing end portions are threaded.
- 15 3. The assembly of claim 1 or 2, wherein the tubular connector further comprises an intermediate portion between the end portions.
4. The assembly of claim 3, wherein the slots extend over the whole length of the connector, slot overlap occurring only in the intermediate portion.
- 20 5. The assembly of claim 3 or 4 wherein the intermediate portion is of corresponding configuration of the tubing lengths, such that the expansion characteristics of the connected tubing assembly are substantially constant over

the connection.

6. The assembly of claim 5, wherein the connector intermediate portion is of substantially the same wall thickness of the tubing and wherein the connector end portions are upset.

7. The assembly of claim 6 wherein each connector end portion defines an internal thread for engaging a corresponding thread on an outer surface of the respective tubing end portion.

10 8. The assembly of any of the preceding claims wherein the connector end portions define grooves to receive corresponding tongues provided on the tubing length end portions.

15 9. A method of connecting lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots, the method comprising:

providing a tubular connector defining overlapping longitudinal slots and comprising end portions;

20 providing lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots and having end portions defining nodes beyond the ends of the slots; and

connecting the connector end portions to the nodes of respective end portions of the tubing lengths.

10. An expandable tubing assembly comprising:

a tubular connector defining overlapping longitudinal slots, the connector comprising end portions and an intermediate portion; and

5 lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots and having end portions coupled to the connector end portions, at least the connector intermediate portion being of corresponding configuration to the tubing lengths, such that the expansion characteristics of the
10 intermediate portion and the tubing lengths correspond.

11. An arrangement for coupling lengths of expandable

tubing, the arrangement comprising a sleeve defining overlapping longitudinal slots, first and second tubing lengths defining overlapping longitudinal slots, in use the

15 sleeve and tubing lengths being radially expandable by deformation of fingers of material where adjacent circumferentially spaced slots overlap, and connecting means for connecting the sleeve to the ends of the tubing lengths, the deformable fingers of the sleeve being axially
20 spaced from the end most deformable fingers of the
 respective tubing lengths.

12. The arrangement of claim 11, wherein the connecting

means are provided at circumferentially spaced locations at the end of the tubing lengths beyond the end most tubing

25 fingers, and at the ends of the sleeves beyond the
 respective end most tubing fingers.

13. The arrangement of claim 11 or 12, wherein the unexpanded sleeve is of larger diameter than the tubing lengths.

5 14. The arrangement of claim 13, wherein the sleeve and the tubing lengths are each of substantially constant diameter along their length.

10 15. A method for coupling the ends of first and second lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots and deformable fingers of material where adjacent circumferentially spaced slots overlap, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a sleeve defining overlapping longitudinal slots and deformable fingers of material where adjacent circumferentially spaced slots overlap;

15 coupling the sleeve to the ends of first and second lengths of expandable tubing such that the fingers of the sleeve are longitudinally spaced from the end most fingers of the tubing lengths; and

20 forcing an expansion member through the connected tubing lengths to expand the sleeve and the tubing lengths.

16. An arrangement for coupling lengths of expandable tubing, the arrangement comprising a longitudinally slotted sleeve, first and second tubing lengths defining overlapping longitudinal slots, in use the tubing lengths 25 being radially expandable by deformation of fingers of

material where adjacent circumferentially spaced slots overlap, and connecting means for connecting the sleeve to the ends of the tubing lengths.

17. The arrangement of claim 16, wherein the sleeve is 5 formed of longitudinally extending strips of metal.

18. The arrangement of claim 17, wherein the strips are rectilinear.

19. The arrangement of claim 17 or 18, wherein the strips are initially circumferentially connected by frangible 10 links.

20. A method for coupling the ends of first and second lengths of expandable tubing defining overlapping longitudinal slots and deformable fingers of material where adjacent circumferentially spaced slots overlap, the method 15 comprising the steps of:

providing a sleeve comprising longitudinally extending strips of material;

coupling the sleeve to the ends of first and second lengths of expandable tubing; and

20 forcing an expansion member through the connected tubing lengths to expand the sleeve and tubing lengths.

1/2

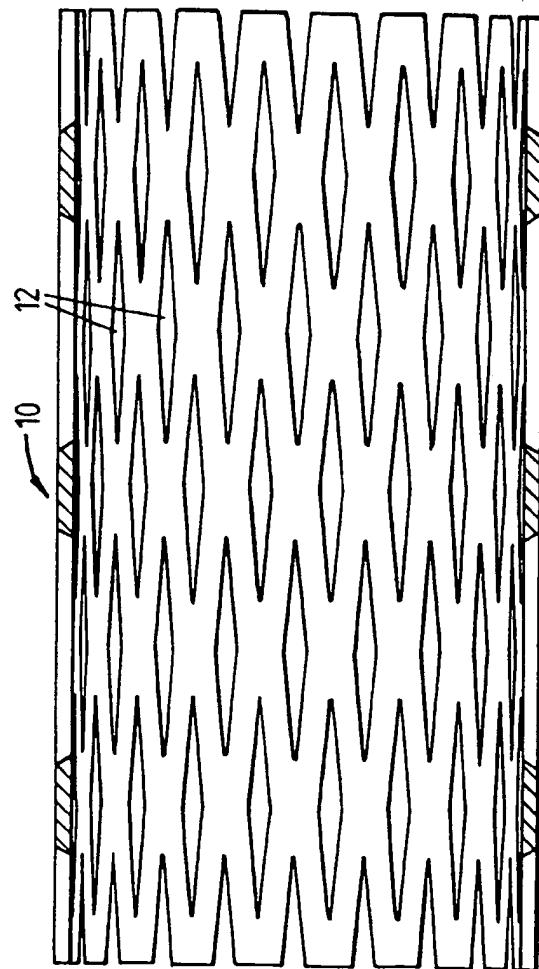


FIG. 1

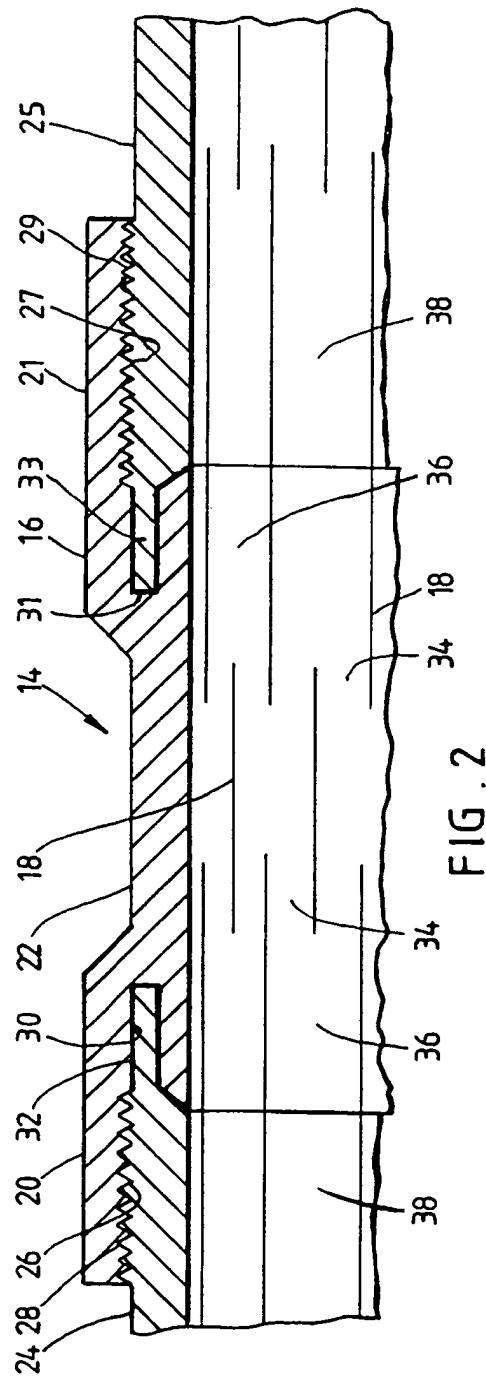


FIG. 2

2/2

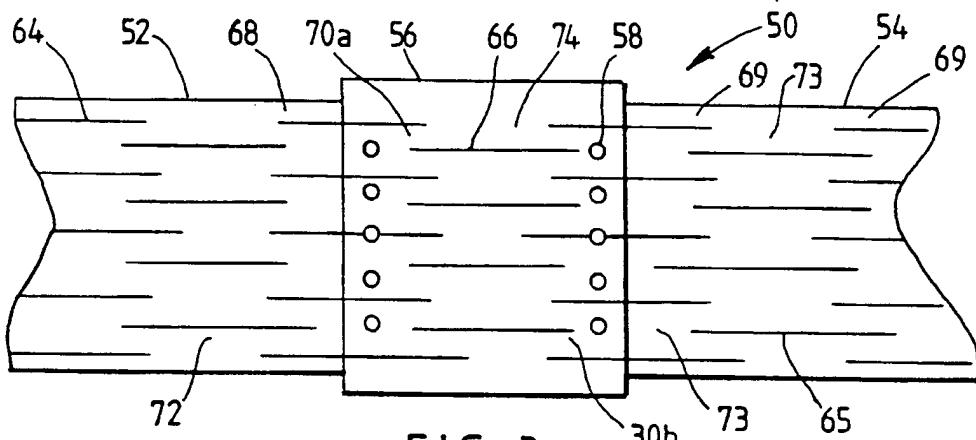


FIG. 3

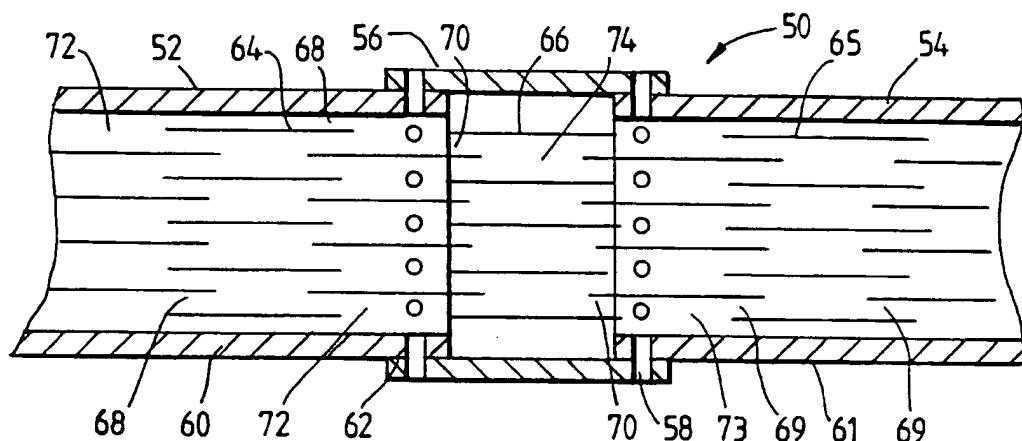


FIG. 4

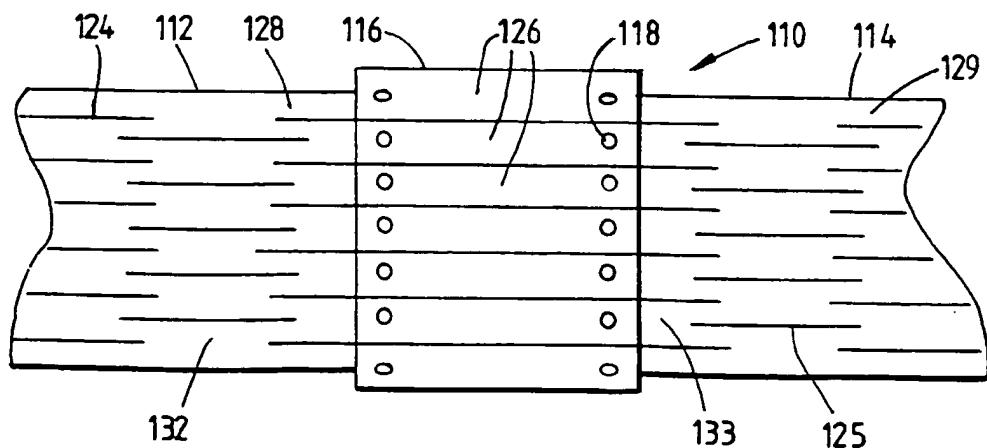


FIG. 5

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/GB 98/00863

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 6 E21B17/08 E21B43/10 E21B43/08 F16L13/14

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
 IPC 6 E21B F16L

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 96 37681 A (PETROLEUM WIRELINE SERVICES LIMITED) 28 November 1996 see page 5, line 21 - page 7, line 2	1-3,5-7, 9,10
A	---	11,15, 16,20
X	WO 96 37680 A (SHELL INTERNATIONALE RESEARCH MAATSCHAPPIJ) 28 November 1996 see page 5, line 1 - page 6, line 22; figures 3,4	1-3,5-7, 9,10
A	---	11,15, 16,20
A	WO 93 25800 A (SHELL INTERNATIONALE RESEARCH MAATSCHAPPIJ) 23 December 1993 cited in the application ---	---
	---	-/-

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

² Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- "X" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- "Y" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- "8" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
17 July 1998	24/07/1998
Name and mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl. Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer Sogno, M

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int'l. Appl. No

PCT/GB 98/00863

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
P,X	WO 97 21901 A (PETROLINE WIRELINE SERVICES LIMITED) 19 June 1997 cited in the application see page 6, line 21 - page 10, line 2 ---	1-4,8-10
E	WO 98 22690 A (SHELL INTERNATIONALE RESEARCH MAATSCHAPPIJ) 28 May 1998 see page 3, line 9 - page 4, line 7 -----	1,3, 9-11,15, 16

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/GB 98/00863

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
WO 9637681	A	28-11-1996	AU	5826596 A	11-12-1996
			AU	7349396 A	11-12-1996
			WO	9637680 A	28-11-1996
			EP	0828918 A	18-03-1998
			EP	0824628 A	25-02-1998
			NO	975348 A	23-01-1998
			NO	975350 A	16-01-1998

WO 9637680	A	28-11-1996	AU	5826596 A	11-12-1996
			AU	7349396 A	11-12-1996
			EP	0828918 A	18-03-1998
			EP	0824628 A	25-02-1998
			WO	9637681 A	28-11-1996
			NO	975348 A	23-01-1998
			NO	975350 A	16-01-1998

WO 9325800	A	23-12-1993	AU	672008 B	19-09-1996
			AU	4324593 A	04-01-1994
			CA	2137565 A	23-12-1993
			DE	69305852 D	12-12-1996
			DE	69305852 T	22-05-1997
			DK	643795 T	14-04-1997
			EP	0643795 A	22-03-1995
			JP	7507611 T	24-08-1995
			MD	960219 A	31-05-1997
			NO	944746 A	03-02-1995
			NZ	253125 A	27-02-1996
			US	5366012 A	22-11-1994

WO 9721901	A	19-06-1997	AU	1068897 A	03-07-1997

WO 9822690	A	28-05-1998		NONE	
